CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

439 There is usually little difficulty in importing goods into Bahrain, except the following, which are not allowed :—

656 (a) Arms and Ammunition,

651 (b) Alcoholic and intoxicating liquors (except under licence).

(c) Cultured, bleached or tinted pearls and undrilled pearls produced outside the Persian Gulf,

(d) Obscene, indecent or seditious literature or pictures,

(e) Dogs, except with special permission of the Director of Customs which will only be granted in the case of dogs accompanied by a veterinary surgeon's certificate of innoculation against rabies.

(f) Counterfeit coins,

(g) Opium and its allied products and cocaine and its allied products.

Books and printed matter, gold and silver bullion and coinage, samples, undrilled Persian Gulf pearls, implements and tools of trade for the use of the traveller are exempt from customs duties. For those arriving for the first time in Bahrain to take up residence, household effects, new clothing, silver and plate are also exempt from duties.

[204] All travellers may bring into the country not more than 100 cigarettes, 50 cigars or ½ pound of tobacco, the containers of which must have been opened.

651 All other goods are liable to a customs duty. The duty on tobacco and liquor is 15%, luxuries pay 10% and necessities, 5%, but prospective travellers should not depend upon this as a hard and fast rule but are advised to ascertain the rates for each article. The Bahrain Government published a Customs Ordinance in 1950 in the form of a booklet, price Rs.2, which is obtainable from the Director of Customs, Manama, Bahrain.

LANGUAGES

191 The official language of Bahrain is Arabic, but some English is spoken in most parts of the State; it is usually possible in cases of difficulty to find an English-speaking Arab

On the other hand the Arabs much appreciate foreigners who take the trouble to learn even the rudiments of their language, which, it must be admitted, is very difficult. For this purpose possibly the best book in print is Van Ess's *Spoken Arabic of Irak*. There are, of course, many other excellent books on Arabic, but for conversational purposes the one above approaches nearest to the particular brand of Arabic spoken in Bahrain.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

486 All intending visitors to Bahrain are required to have passports endorsed for Bahrain, and in addition they should apply for an entry

674 The following were some of the more serious cases of theft ; clothing and money were stolen from people staying in a local hotel in the bazaar, money was stolen from a house in Rafaa and a radio and carpet was stolen from the house of a member of the American Mission. In all these cases the thieves were caught and the stolen property was recovered. In 11 other cases thefts of money, jewellery, wearing apparel, etc., were reported to the Police. In some instances persons were prosecuted for theft, but acquitted and in other cases no evidence was obtained.

Five Pakistanis were prosecuted for "bilking" shop keepers.

674 273 Fewer persons than in the previous year were convicted for contravention of liquor and drug regulations, this does not, however, indicate any decrease in the habit of drinking which among certain classes is becoming almost universal. Altogether 24 persons were prosecuted for distilling, selling and being in possession of liquor and for dealing in hashish and opium.

548 276 In one case a Palestinian was found to be in possession of 15 lbs. of opium. There is every reason to believe that an active trade in opium is carried on through Bahrain to the West. It is brought to Bahrain from Persia and India via the Trucial Coast and then conveyed on to ships in the harbour which carry it to Europe or the United States.

731 **Fires.** There were a number of serious fires during the year in which many people lost their barasti houses and their possessions. Most of the fires were caused by pressure stoves or lamps which ignited Saaf (palm branch) houses. There were no cases of arson.

The most serious fire was in the Telegraph area where 75 houses were completely destroyed together with their contents. A very strong wind fanned the fire which was only prevented from spreading over another area of barasti houses by wide roads on three sides of the site. This was one of the worst fires known in Bahrain. It appears to have been caused by an old blind man who knocked over a fire or a lamp in his house which lit the palm branch walls of the building. No lives were lost. In the village of Mahooz 55 houses were destroyed in one fire a few of these houses had mud and stone walls and matting roofs. In other fires, some of them in Manama and some in the villages, 17, 12, 15 and 14 houses were destroyed. In none of these fires was there any loss of life. In a fire in a launch, anchored off Manama, one man lost his life. More supplies of fire fighting equipment, hose pipe, etc., etc., which had been ordered in England were part of the cargo of a Strick Line ship which caught fire near Sitra and which burned for several days.

[368]

AGENCY COURT

RESULT OF PROSECUTIONS IN 1372

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No.	Nature of Offences.	No. of Cases.	No. of persons accused.	No. of persons convicted.	No. of persons acquitted.	Remarks.
1	Causing Death by Rash or Negligent Act	1	1	1	—	
2	Theft	1	1	1	—	
3	Cheating	1	1	1	—	
4	Criminal breach of trust	2	2	2	—	
5	Use of criminal force and assault	1	1	—	1	
6	Liquor drinking and possession of	6	7	6	1	
7	Charas and Opium	1	2	1	1	
8	Affray	1	3	3	—	
		14	18	15	3	

NATIONALITIES :

British	1 person
Indian	3 persons
Pakistan	2 „
Palestine	1 „
Transjordan	1 person
Iran	10 persons
	18

suit them, they spoke no Arabic, and were regarded by the people of Bahrain as expensive foreign mercenaries; they were useless at ordinary police work, and the Indian Officers and N.C.O.'s caused constant trouble by incessant quarrels and intrigues. The Indians were enlisted for four years, but before this period had expired I began to enlist a force of local men as police, a project which I always strongly advocated. It was from this time that the present force was started, but the final transition was not completed until the end of 1932.

Crime and Prostitution.

The number of serious crimes which are committed every year in Bahrain is small in comparison to the population, which is thought to be about 150,000. Usually about one or two cases of murder are dealt with by the police during the year, but it is possible that occasional murders take place which are not detected, especially murders of women and newly born children. Although in recent years Bahrain has progressed in many ways, there are still a number of Arabs living in Hedd and Muharraq who consider that they are justified in murdering their female relations if the women bring shame on the family. A few of the very old-fashioned Arabs even consider that because the Government does not ignore such murders it is encouraging immorality. The Kadis, however, although ultra conservative in their outlook, disapprove of men taking the law into their own hands and murdering women who misbehave. In some Arab countries the fear of punishment by death for immorality has a very salutary effect, but Bahrain, although described as an Arab state, has very little in common with real Arab countries. The Baharna, who form about three quarters of the population, are not true Arabs, and the rest of the population includes all the nationalities who live around the Gulf. The only real Arabs in Bahrain are the Khalifah and a few families who came over with them from the mainland and a small number of members of mainland tribes who live almost entirely in Hedd, Muharraq, Budeya, and two or three small villages on the south coast.

Immorality is undoubtedly increasing, but the increase in prostitution is not due to the Government but is a matter of supply and demand. During the last two years numbers of foreigners earning good pay have come to Bahrain, usually without their families, from Persia, Iraq, and India, and this has undoubtedly caused an increase in prostitution. Venereal disease is rampant, and the proportion of persons suffering from it, especially in ophthalmic forms, is very high. The medical supervision of prostitutes would undoubtedly result in an improvement in the public health. This suggestion was discussed and approved by the Manamah Municipal Council some years ago, but it has not yet been possible to arrange the medical organisation to cope with this matter.

Most of the criminal cases which are dealt with by the police are cases of theft, assault, and immorality. Several important gangs of thieves have been rounded up during the last ten years. Some of these gangs were well provided with arms and had regular methods of disposing of stolen property in Bahrain or on the mainland. Foreigners, especially Hassawis, form the majority of the criminals. There are a number of inveterate thieves who spend the greater part of their lives in prison. Such persons, on the mainland, would be punished by cutting off of their hands and finally by decapitation. The punishments inflicted by the Bahrain courts are whippings, fines, and imprisonment, but imprisonment to many of these people is no hardship: the work is not hard, they are given better food than they would obtain themselves, and the only real punishment is being deprived of women.

Drugs and Liquor.

Liquor and drugs, such as opium, are forbidden in Bahrain, but in spite of the severe penalties which are enforced by the Bahrain courts against persons contravening the liquor regulations, the habit of drinking liquor and smoking opium is, in my opinion, steadily increasing. Ten years ago very few people drank liquor, and the smoking of opium was entirely confined to foreigners, Persians, Indians, and Baluchis. To-day many of the younger Arabs have acquired a liking for spirits, partly because they have had opportunities for drinking while travelling abroad, and frequent cases have occurred in which Arabs have been found to be taking opium.

Opium is smuggled into Bahrain from Persia, usually in native crafts, but sometimes hidden in merchandise on the mail steamers. It varies in quality, most frequently it is in large lumps weighing four or five pounds, but sometimes it is in paper-covered sticks sealed up in bundles. It is very

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276 439 expensive in Bahrain, and successful opium smugglers and retailers make large profits. Opium is easy to hide and lacks the strong smell which frequently leads to the detection of locally made liquor. In opium cases the police depend mainly on informers, who are usually men who are themselves concerned in the opium business but who consider that they have not had a fair share of the profits and so give their friends away. Opium has been discovered hidden in gramophones, clocks, flour-bins, and in the ceilings of rooms.

273 Illicit liquor used to consist entirely of locally distilled arak made from dates. Ten years ago it was manufactured only by two or three Iraqis and Jews, who were gradually rounded up, but in about 1930 there was a great increase in arak, and a number of Bahrain subjects took to making it, probably because it was such a profitable trade. The illicit liquor traffickers displayed great ingenuity in hiding their stills and their cellars: arak was made in ruined houses, in out-of-the-way date gardens and in subterranean rooms which still exist in a few old houses which were used in the past as places for hiding valuables in times of war. Distributors kept bottled supplies of arak in wells, in false walls, under rubbish heaps, and sometimes under the seats of motor cars. In one case the police discovered that the municipal lunatic asylum was a distributing centre, and the keeper and his wife were members of a liquor gang.

About two years ago, after numerous prosecutions, there appeared to be a decrease in the use of arak, but cases began to occur in which people used methylated spirits as a drink. During the last year this practice has increased very much, and a concoction consisting of methylated spirits mixed with eau-de-Cologne is rapidly taking the place of arak. It is probably more injurious to the health than arak, but it is very popular with women of the town, and apparently a small quantity causes drunkenness in a short time. Methylated spirit is only sold to reliable dealers, and is mixed before being sold with a chemical to make it unpalatable; there are no restrictions, however, on the sale of scent.

The Ruler, the religious leaders, and the majority of the people in Bahrain disapprove very strongly of drink, but there is a small section of the community which would like the restrictions on liquor to be removed. The great influx of well-paid foreigners from countries where the sale of liquor is allowed is the chief reason for the increase of cases against the liquor laws. There is undoubtedly an occasional leakage of liquor from the Bahrain Petroleum Company, but this is not sufficiently frequent to have any effect on the liquor question in general. The most effective way of preventing the increase in drinking is to deal very drastically with any cases which are proved in the courts.

697 **The State Jail.** The jail is in the Fort and consists of a number of cells and a yard. Prisoners are well fed—they usually put on weight during their term of imprisonment—and are provided with clothes. Convicts wear leg-irons, which is a measure to prevent their escape, as they work outside the Fort most of the day. There are no regular warders, but each section of the police takes in turn jail duties; this was found more satisfactory than having a permanent jail staff. Usually there are between twenty and thirty convicts in the prison. Debtors receive the same food as prisoners, but wear their own clothes and are not obliged to do any work apart from cleaning the prison. As most of the convicts serve for short terms, it has not been possible to organise any prison industries. There is no women's prison, but there are two cells adjoining the house of the senior police N.C.O., whose wife acts as a wardress if any women are confined in the Fort. The question of a small building for women prisoners is under consideration, and the present jail is also to be repaired during the coming year.

625 **The Present Police Force.** Although the existing police force was enlisted locally, the men are not all Bahrain subjects. The present strength of the police is 204 N.C.O.'s and men, including Bahrain Arabs, Shia Baharna, local Persians, and one or two Persians who served in the South Persian Rifles, Kurds, Yemenis, Iraqis, mainland Arabs, Swahilis, Somalis, Sudanese, and a number of manumitted slaves; the last category make very good policemen. In the past, service in the police was regarded as somewhat derogatory, but in the last few years the public attitude towards the police has changed: there is now keen competition to enlist in the force, and when a few recruits are required, hundreds of men present themselves at the Fort for enlistment. It is now possible to take only picked men whose height, chest measure-